



State Rehabilitation Council

Nebraska Department of Education
301 Centennial Mall South • PO Box 94987 • Lincoln, NE 68509

Cozad Diagnostic Center
1910 Meridian Avenue
Cozad, NE 69130
308-784-4525

August 9, 2005
10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Present: Kim Boyce, *Don Crouch, Eileen Curry, Sue Geischen, Gayle Hahn, Sandy Ham, Marc Hultine, David Jelinek, Les Kimmons, Tim Kolb, Frank Lloyd, Vicki Rasmussen, Mark Schultz, Pearl Van Zandt, and Merwyn Vavrina*

Absent: *Sharon Bloechle, Linda Douglas, Kay Grone and Mike Newman*

Minutes by *Cheryle Adams*

Gayle Hahn called the meeting to order

I Public Comment: None

II. Approval of Agenda

Motion made by Pearl to approve the agenda. Merwyn seconded. Motion passed, agenda approved.

III. Approval of Minutes from April 12, 2005

Motion made by Pearl to approve the April 12, 2005 minutes. Vicki seconded. Motion passed, Minutes approved.

IV. Director's Report (*Frank Lloyd*)

- 1 Frank mentioned that VR would be moving to a new location in Fremont. It is on the grounds of the Fremont medical complex. The space is handicapped accessible, modern and clean. The move is to be completed by September 30th. The space will give us more space for Omaha staff to serve the ever expanding referrals in Fremont.
2. Frank stated that VR got the state funding we needed to be able to match federal funds and that the cost of living increase was part of that.
3. WIA is still waiting reauthorization. Frank has heard that the WIA plus legislation has very little support and is not likely to be part of the WIA legislation which probably won't be reauthorized until next year.
4. Traumatic Brain Injury—VR has funded two TBI projects. One is Development Services of NE—Roger Stortenbecker. The other is Goodwill Industries of Greater Nebraska—Chris Nolan-Brown.

The projects will be determining what services and supports are needed for consumers with TBI to enter employment.

VR would like to establish a brain injury trust fund. This would supplement the DD waiver and allow VR to expand services to people with traumatic brain injuries. Mark stated they would like to create an interim crisis fund for those that become injured, but are not eligible for supports. This would provide temporary assistance while they are waiting for funding or while they are recuperating.

5. Process management—VR is trying continuing to document their employment process.

The “Orientation to VR” is being revised. It will be much shorter and use a video streaming format so it can be viewed over the internet. The primary focus of the orientation will be preparing consumers for a job, getting a job and keeping the job.

VR has also been working on restructuring the “Employment Discussion.” They have developed a guide of key questions to initiate conversation with the consumers around important employment issues. The guide is only helpful as staff have good interviewing skills, thorough knowledge of disabilities, as well as knowledge of community resources, etc. During the “Employment Discussion” consumers have an opportunity to talk about their work history and life experiences as they affect their work.

At the close of the employment discussion staff will document their discussion and give a copy to the consumer. If staff have concerns, these need to be shared with the consumer. This summary will provide a framework of the issues that need to be addressed as the consumer moves toward employment. Dennis King and Janet Drudik will provide more information about the change we are making at the next council meeting.

6. The IPE notebook is ready to go to the printers. Staff have made numerous suggestions and a number of changes have been made. There is less reading/writing for consumers, balanced with more assistance from staff.
7. Transition—Frank proposed that the council look at VR’s transition efforts and evaluate them this year. The council might consider using a survey to gather information. Frank stated that VR plans to service more youth this year, there is a prevention issue here. If we don’t work with youth now, many will drop out of school with no plans. A recent national study revealed that about 50% of special education students don’t complete school and have no vocation plans. Many stay at home or get in trouble with the law.

Staff have been working on developing a guide to be used as a resource. This lists 14 minimum requirements, in service transition student ages 14-21. Currently each of the 14 VR employment teams are developing a plan to indicate how they will meet VR minimum transition requirements.

Minimum Transition Requirements for VR Teams

1. **Provide VR transition orientation to new students, grades 9-12:** As in adult services, the purpose of transition orientation is to emphasize that we are available to help students with disabilities to prepare for work and explain what services VR provides to accomplish this.
2. **Provide VR transition orientation to educators:** Teachers and school staff with whom we work need to know our transition services and procedures so they can refer appropriate students and so we can work together to provide effective services to students.
3. **Coordinate transition planning with local schools using the Transition Partnership Planning Form (This includes schools with 20 or more students under an IEP):** The Transition Partnership Planning Form demonstrates the roles of VR and the school in providing transition services. We need to understand the needs of school professionals, students, parents, VR and other agencies or transition services will not be successful.
4. **Provide opportunities for students, grade 9-12, to learn from employers:** VR staff is the specialist in understand the world of work and these community activities are essential for students and schools to develop a successful transition plan leading to employment. These community activities support the school, students, and VR needs.
5. **Provide opportunities for students, grades 9-12, and their families to learn about transition resources in the community:** Students with disabilities often need more services and resources than the school and VR can give them. Since VR is connected to community resources to serve its adult clients we have a responsibility to provide these resources to the transition population.
6. **Be available for individual or group consultation with parents and students, grade 9-12:** When it is appropriate VR staff may need to meet with students and/or parents individually or in a group setting to discuss specific transition planning issues.
7. **Develop a schedule of events and planned contacts with schools, the schedule will be posted on the VR transition website:** To assist with building relationships with schools, students, and parents, VR staff will develop a schedule which includes school visits, community activities, and transition related events.
8. **Assure that the five key components (NCE Document) of career planning are addressed before the student enters the adult program or is considered for a transition outcome:** All students, prior to graduation should complete VR or NCE transition activities in the following key component areas: Career Awareness, Exploration, Preparation, Application and Working In A Career.
9. **Provide opportunities for students to interact with VR staff in a group setting in the high school:** Working with students in the classroom on employment issues is the

most effective way to build relationships and an efficient way for VR staff to provide transition services.

10. **Develop and submit team or office plan to show how the above minimum requirements will be met for the 2005-2006 school year.** Each team is required to submit a detailed plan demonstrating how they will meet requirements 1-9.

V. Old Business

- A. SRC Training movies (*Don Crouch*)
These will be shown at the next meeting.

Working Lunch (11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.) Committee Meetings

VI. New Business

- A. Change name/focus of Interagency Committee to (employer relations committee) (*Don Crouch*)

The council is entertaining ideas on moving the committees into a new direction. What is needed to best serve VR.

There was discussion about transition and that there is more focus on transition on a national level.

The council discussed changing the names/focus of two committees. The Client Services Committee would remain. Dissolved are the Interagency Committee and the Strategic Planning Committee. The two new committees are: Transition Services Committee and Employer Services Committee.

Eileen made a motion to change format of the two committees to Transition Services Committee and Employer Services Committee. Sue seconded the motion. Motion passed and the reformation of the committees has been approved.

Next is recruitment of council members to the committees. We are losing Sue Geischen, Tim Kolb and Susan Rocker.

Transition Services Committee: (*Frank Lloyd*) Linda Douglas, Chair
Members: Linda Douglas, Frank Lloyd, Kim Boyce and Gayle Hahn

Client Services Committee: (*Don Crouch*) Les Kimmons, Chair
Members: Les Kimmons, Merwyn Vavrina, Vicki Rasmussen and Dave Jelinek

Employer Services Committee: (*Jim Coyle*) Eileen Curry, Chair
Members: Eileen Curry, Sandy Ham, Marc Hultine, Mark Schultz and Pearl Van Zandt. Don will talk to Jim Coyle about him routinely providing assistance to the committee.

Don mentioned as the new people come in, we will let them decide the committees they want to be a part of.

- B. Recruitment--each committee to address this (*Gayle Hahn/Don Crouch*)
The council is losing Sue Gieschen, Tim Kolb and Susan Rocker.

We still need a SPED representative, Don will check to see if Linda Douglas is still able to fill that designation.

Tim Kolb was the SILC representative. When in subcommittee meeting—think of anyone that make a good candidate for the council. Need someone from SPED and more employers.

C. Election of officers (*Gayle Hahn*)

Chair: Gayle Hahn was nominated as Chair. Sue motioned that nominations cease, Pearl seconded. The council voted, Gayle Hahn will be the Chair for 2005/2006

Vice Chair: Pearl was nominated as Vice Chair. Gayle motioned that nominations cease, Eileen seconded. The council voted, Pearl Van Zandt will be the Vice Chair for 2005/2006.

Executive Committee. Members can only serve two consecutive terms. Need three individuals to serve.

Nominated were Vicki Rasmussen, Mike Newman and Sharon Bloechle.

Frank seconded Vicki's nomination, Les seconded Mike's nomination and Tim seconded Sharon's nomination.

The council voted and Vicki Rasmussen, Mike Newman and Sharon Bloechle will serve on the 2005/2006 Executive Committee.

D. Tour of Cozad Facility (*Cheryle Adams*)

VII. Reports

A. CAP Report (*Vicki Rasmussen*)

Vicki mentioned the CAP website is being redone. She is in the process of contacting agencies that VR has cooperative agreements with and sharing CAP information. Vicki has met with WorkSource, Victory House with Goodwill in Grand Island. Vicki contacted the Centers for Independent Living regarding CAP information and has been to the Omaha League of Human Dignity and will be visiting the Norfolk League.

Vicki stated that she has reviewed VR policies regarding "Post-Secondary as an Assessment Service" and a policy about working with sex offenders.

CAP will be meeting in Kansas City in September. This will be the last one with RSA. Those offices will be officially closing the end of September.

B. SILC Report (Tim Kolb)

The Nebraska Statewide Independent Living Council (NESILC) is involved with a number of organizations and activities in order to better pursue its role as an advocacy organization. One of those organizations is the Nebraska Medicaid Coalition which was formed after the passage of

LB709—the Medicaid Reform Act. This Coalition consists of 20 other organizations, including the Appleseed Center, Voices for Children, Nebraska Advocacy Services, and others. Another organization is Nebraskans to Protect Social Security which is, itself, a part of a national organization dedicated to watching for and taking appropriate actions against proposed federal changes to Social Security that could adversely affect persons with disabilities throughout the US. NESILC also belongs to the Judicial Nomination Coalition, a nationally based organization that tries to influence who is accepted as a Supreme Court or Circuit Court nominee proposed by the Bush Administration.

NESILC recently spearheaded an effort to create a Youth Leadership Council under the Nebraska Disability Leadership Council. Although created by NESILC, the youth leadership organization remains autonomous from NESILC. The organization encourages leadership among young Nebraskans with disabilities by providing opportunities for involvement in advocacy efforts. Ultimately, these youth will take over the leadership positions now populated by their older peers.

As it did for the first time last year, NESILC remains a co-host to the Nebraska Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (NCCD). NCCD is an organization of organizations representing a broad cross-section of various disability concerns. The purpose of NCCD is to influence Nebraska legislation that positively or negatively impacts persons with disabilities in the state. During each legislative session, letters of support or opposition to proposed legislation are submitted by NCCD to members of the Nebraska Unicameral for their consideration.

NESILC continues to maintain its active membership in various national advocacy organizations including the National Council on Independent Living (NCIL), the Association of Programs for Rural Independent Living (APRIL), and the Statewide Independent Living Council Congress (SILC Congress -- a national organization of SILCs).

Legislative advocacy through its Advocacy Committee remains a high priority for the NESILC. As it has for the past four years, NESILC still pursues an upgrade to the Medicaid Insurance for Workers with Disabilities (MIWD also known as the Medicaid Buy-In). The 709 Committee established to reform Medicaid in Nebraska may actually be an opportunity to incorporate the MIWD upgrade in the reform legislation. NESILC also continues to advocate for a Nebraskans with Disabilities Act (NDA), an ADA type legislation for Nebraska. Finally, NESILC is pursuing passage of the "Risk Statute," also known as the "Bill Rush Act." This legislation proposes to codify the right of qualified persons with disabilities to take acceptable risk which is typically a part of independent living in the community. The language of this legislation was originally drafted by Mr. David Babcock, staff attorney for the Department of Health and Human Services Systems as an outcome of the work done by the Consumer Task Force of the Real Choice Grant.

C. ATP Report (*Mark Schultz*)

Mark distributed the brochure "Tech Connectors." This is a users guide listing of computer equipment that is being recycled. It contains equipment listed by agencies, individuals for sale and give away. This is anything from computers to wheelchairs, even augmentative communication devices.

He also distributed the brochure on "Alternative Financing." This is a collaboration with Easter Seals, Assistive Technology and First National Bank of Omaha. The Nebraska Alternative Financing Program provides low or reduced interest loans to assist in the purchase of assistive technology devices and services for those in need.

The second program is the Nebraska Telework Loan Program. This provides low or reduced interest

loans to qualified Nebraskan with disabilities for the purchase of equipment and services necessary for securing Telework and/or self-employment opportunities from home or other sites.

Loans for both programs range from \$1,500 to \$50,000, have a reduced interest rate and negotiable terms.

Mark discussed “solutions on-site” with VR staff. They are taking a different approach in Omaha and Norfolk that has led to a greater increase in referrals. A member of the Assistive Technology project sits in on the team meeting and helps to come up with assistive technology solutions to assist the consumer. Referrals have increased, there have been 59 referrals in Omaha, and 29 in Norfolk as opposed to 4 in Norfolk last year.

ATP is working with the federal veteran affairs vocational rehabilitation program in doing assistive tech assessment. ATP has helped in identifying assistive technology solutions as well as assisting with home modifications.

Lastly, ATP is working on creating a housing database. Nebraska doesn’t have a good database for rental housing. They are working with a contractor to create a statewide listing of affordable and accessible housing in Nebraska. Consumers will be able to go on line and do searches for any part of the state. The site will be able to identify the features the unit has, whether it is accessible or not, and the services available in that area. This program is operating in other states and would like to have this operating in Nebraska by January 1st. This will be updated every two weeks. Other state data can be viewed at socialserve.com. Several entities have been approached on funding this project. The estimate is \$25,000 to have up and running, then \$18,000 to \$20,000 a year to maintain. They are promoting this with the public housing authorities, landlords, etc., giving people an opportunity to partner on this.

D. Members Leaving (*Frank Lloyd*)

Frank voiced his gratitude toward Tim Kolb and Susan Geischen for adding their perspective while serving on the council. He recognized that it isn’t easy to get out to these meetings. “It is the council members that make the council strong.”

Tim and Susan were presented a certificate of recognition for their service on the State Rehabilitation Council.

E. Annual Report (*Sandy Ham*)

Committee chairs were reminded that their reports are needed for the annual report. Sandy would like to have the reports to her by early September.

Sandy mentioned that the person who does the layout is moving and is hoping that this won’t be an issue in the future. Sandy still wants to follow last year’s timetable as the print shop will be busy with legislative publications.

F. Committee Reports--New Committees

1. Employer Services Committee (Jim Coyle) (*Eileen Curry, Chair*)

They are excited and will want to meet with Don and Jim Coyle to help in redefining themselves in order to provide support to VR. They will meet with Jim Coyle at the next council meeting to help focus direction.

Discussion focused on concerns of the relationship VR has with the client, and the client's relationship to the employer. Marc mentioned the issue with staffing agencies. Many companies are using staffing agencies that are working with people attempting to shove "blank keys" to ultimately make a fit. He suggests that VR needs to work closer with the company's HR and staffing agencies, proving to them that we have the right employee for the right job. VR needs to expand on the potential of staffing agencies, convincing employers to look at VR first.

Jim Coyle will have a good sense of how this works with the placement teams throughout the state.

Also discussed were identifying employers that have done a good job working with VR consumers and giving them a "pat on the back." The council would send letters to them thanking them for working with out consumers and recognize them publicly on a regular basis. This recognition could be part of the annual report.

Frank mentioned—that the publication Quality Employment Solutions features one employer and two consumers in every publication.

Don mentioned that he would like to see part of this committee's role be to recruit members to the council from the business community. This would need to go to the executive council first before talking to the individual. The council would need to check making sure they meet the criteria.

2. Transition Services Committee (*Frank Lloyd for Linda Douglas, Chair*)

Frank will contact Linda Douglas to be the chairperson of this committee. They discussed the minimum transition requirements. They discussed doing a customer satisfaction survey. This would go out to the school administration, school staff, students and parents. The focus would be their perceptions on working with VR.

3. Client Services Committee (Don Crouch) (*Les Kimmons, Chair*)

The committee discussed the changes made in the IPE notebook. They would like to have Dennis King and Janet Drudik come to the next meeting to talk about the changes.

The changes will affect some of the survey items on the consumer survey. They discussed ways of doing the survey, possibly doing a phone interview. This focuses on the client and how VR has met their needs.

Don, Dave and Vic will put together questions regarding he survey and how it is working from the consumer's point of view.

Merwyn recommended that the survey team ask whether the consumers have a computer and access to the internet. It was also recommended that this question be asked on the front end of the applications. It is important that we know whether the consumer has computer/internet access.

They discussed the annual report. Sandy Ham is coordinating this.

Sue moved that the meeting adjourn, Les seconded. The meeting was adjourned.

A working lunch will be provided for council members